

## Brown gives King Fahd Clinton message

RIYADH (Agencies) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown gave King Fahd a message on bilateral relations from President Bill Clinton after arriving here Saturday for trade talks with Saudi officials, Saudi state radio reported. It did not specify what the message said. Mr. Brown told reporters on arrival that a deal to modernise the national airline Saudia with some 60 airliners at a cost of \$6 billion would be discussed. The European Airbus consortium is also competing for the order. Earlier Mr. Brown said he was confident that U.S. aircraft firms would win the order. Mr. Brown also said he would examine opportunities for U.S. firms to modernise Saudi Arabia's telecommunications network, in talks with Saudi Communications Minister Hussein Mansouri. Several Western companies, including the French firm Alcatel, are competing for the order, up to \$3 billion. Mr. Brown is also due to visit Jordan, Israel and Egypt.

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# Jordan Times

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جورдан تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الرأي

## Iraq seeks help in lifting sanctions

AMMAN (AP) — Iraq is seeking Jordan's intervention with Washington to help lift the sweeping embargo imposed on Baghdad following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, diplomats said Saturday. They said Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, Iraq's international point man during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, arrived in Jordan earlier Saturday to relay Baghdad's request. Iraqi embassy spokesman Adel Ibrahim said Mr. Aziz was scheduled to meet with several Jordanian officials during his two-day stay. He refused to discuss the nature of Mr. Aziz's talks here. But another diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Aziz "wants to ask Jordan to intercede with Washington to lift the unjustified sanctions against the people of Iraq." Jordanian officials said Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who is due to leave for the United States within 48 hours, was scheduled to meet with Mr. Aziz on Sunday. Dr. Majali will be joining His Majesty King Hussein for talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House on Jan. 21.

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## Pope's Lebanon trip to go ahead — Hariri

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri made clear Saturday that Pope John Paul would visit Lebanon this year despite a dispute caused by the Vatican's recognition of Israel. Some Muslim clerics reacted to the recognition last month by saying the Pope should not make the visit expected in May. The pro-Iranian Hezbollah called the recognition "an historic sin" and there has been mounting speculation in the press that the visit might be called off. However, Mr. Hariri told members of Lebanon's journalists union that the recognition was badly timed and damaged Arab interests but Lebanon was still ready to welcome the Pope. "We do not confuse our appreciation and respect for the Pope with the political step of recognising Israel," Mr. Hariri said.

## Arab envoy to visit Iraq on 'detainees'

KUWAIT (R) — Arab League officials will visit Iraq this month for talks aimed at securing the release of hundreds of Kuwaitis missing and believed held by Baghdad, a newspaper reported on Saturday. A special delegation would leave for Baghdad on Jan. 20 "a bid to help release Kuwaiti detainees." Al Araba newspaper reported Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid as saying in an interview. Kuwait says Iraq holds at least 624 people detained during its seven-month occupation of the emirate in 1990-91. These comprise 563 Kuwaitis, 13 Saudis, five Iranians, four Egyptians, four Syrians, three Indians, three Lebanese, an Omani, a Bahraini, a Filipino and 26 stateless Arabs. Iraq denies it still holds anyone detained during the Gulf crisis.

## Iran confirms arrests in Tehran attacks

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian authorities confirmed Saturday they have arrested 17 people in connection with attacks on embassies and public areas in Tehran. The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency, IRNA, said four of those arrested were later released after questioning. It quoted police Colonel Reza Mohammadi as saying some of the detainees confessed to having links with the outlawed Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. The Baghdad-based Mujahedeen repeatedly have denied any connection with the attacks. The announcement of arrests by Iranian authorities confirmed a report the day before in the English-language Tehran Times, which quoted an unidentified Interior Ministry source.

## Saudi-Yemeni talks on border resume Monday

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni experts Monday will resume talks in Sanaa to resolve a border dispute between the two countries. Yemen's ambassador to Riyadh, Ghaleb Ali Jameel, told AFP on Saturday. The dispute concerns the border provinces of Najran, Jizan and Asir, which came under Saudi control under an agreement signed in 1934. Yemen wants a return of the territories, saying the agreement expired in 1992. It has refused to renew the accord. The Saudi-Yemeni meeting, originally scheduled for Dec. 20, is the seventh since the talks on the border issue began more than a year ago. It was delayed at the Yemenis' request when their chief negotiator, Jaafar Saleh, fell ill.

## U.S. congressmen visit Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Five United States congressmen arrived here Saturday to check that everything is ready for a smooth handover to the United Nations when American forces withdraw in March. Leading the delegation was representative John Murtha, chairman of the House of Representatives Defence Appropriations Committee, a Democrat from Pennsylvania.

# Clinton and Assad meet today amid positive signals

Sarid says Golan 'sovereignty' will have to be returned to Syria • Damascus sees summit success

GENEVA (Agencies) — U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad, who holds the key to an overall Middle East peace, arrived here Saturday amid tight security for a summit aimed at reviving Syrian-Israeli negotiations.

Mr. Assad arrived ahead of Mr. Clinton at the heavily-guarded International Hotel, where the two are to hold their first ever talks, expected to last three hours, on Sunday.

Neither leader made any statement, but official comments from Israel and Syria set an upbeat tone for the summit.

Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said Israel was ready to give up sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which it seized in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, but return for total peace with Syria.

"If Syria is ready for real, total peace, with diplomatic relations, the opening of borders and very detailed security arrangements, Israel will, in exchange, have to give up sovereignty over the Golan," Mr. Sarid said on Israel television.

Mr. Beilin also said that if as part of an agreement, U.S. troops and other international peacekeepers were deployed in a Golan buffer zone, "this would contribute to stability in our region."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said in the past that in exchange for peace he is ready to pull out from part of the Golan, but never spoke publicly of full withdrawal.

"After the summit meeting, Israel will form its position, and act according to what will

Golan. If President Assad spells out to President Clinton at Sunday's summit what type of relations he envisions with Israel, then the Israeli government "will have to make some important and difficult decisions in the near future," Mr. Sarid said on Israel radio.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Israel was ready to discuss the details of withdrawal if Mr. Assad revealed his position.

"If Clinton tomorrow will hear new things from Assad, we will at this stage certainly be committed ... to start negotiating the borders (between Israel and Syria)," Mr. Beilin said on Israel television.

Mr. Beilin also said that if as part of an agreement, U.S. troops and other international peacekeepers were deployed in a Golan buffer zone, "this would contribute to stability in our region."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said in the past that in exchange for peace he is ready to pull out from part of the Golan, but never spoke publicly of full withdrawal.

"After the summit meeting, Israel will form its position, and act according to what will

develop. We will not deal with any hypothetical situations," a Rabin aide said Saturday, when asked to comment on Mr. Sarid. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Hawkish opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that Mr. Rabin's government already proposed to Syria some time ago "to carry out complete withdrawal from

all of the Golan, until the 1967 lines, a withdrawal in stages."

He said Israel also proposed that U.S. forces be deployed in parts of the Golan as a buffer.

Mr. Netanyahu, who

opposes any withdrawal from the Golan as a step that would endanger Israel's security, spoke on army radio. Mr. Netanyahu has said this in the past, and it has been denied by the government.

Meanwhile, Israel Radio released some results of a telephone survey among 250 families living in the Golan.

Asked whether it was possible to make peace with Syria without giving up all of the Golan, 55 per cent said no.

Fifty-five per cent also said they expected Israel and Syria to reach an agreement within five years that would involve some Israeli withdrawal.

Asked whether they would remain in their homes under Syrian sovereignty, 85.5 per cent said no. Another 52 per cent said they have discussed the possibility of leaving the Golan, and 11 per cent of them have taken some practical steps, such as looking for a new job or home, the radio said.

Although Mr. Assad and Mr. Clinton are staying in the same hotel, they are not due to meet until Sunday morning.

During talks in Moscow, Mr. Clinton and Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin said they were determined to achieve

progress on issues affecting Syria and Lebanon on the basis of United Nations resolutions.

A Syrian official in Damascus, speaking as Mr. Assad was leaving for Geneva, said his country received this assurance with optimism. He suggested it showed the world had recognised "that incomplete peace could not give security to anyone."

Syrian radio, meanwhile, said the summit looked as if it would succeed and that Damascus and Washington "agreed on the broad lines of a settlement in the Middle East."

Damascus, Saturday repeated its stand that peace would not last unless the Jewish state withdrew from all the other Arab territories seized in 1967 — East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"A just and comprehensive peace, not a separate peace, not a separate compromise, not secret negotiations..." the official Al Thawra newspaper said.

Leaders of Jewish settlers on the Golan were in Geneva to urge Mr. Clinton to respect what they said was their right to live on the strategic heights.

(Continued on page 5)



## House endorses draft budget 56-20 after marathon debate

By Ayman Al Safadi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday endorsed the draft budget for 1994 after introducing a number of amendments recommended by the House's Financial Committee.

Fifty-six out of 77 deputies present at the session voted in favour of the budget and 20 voted against it. House Speaker Taher Al Masri did not vote.

In addition to the 16-member Islamic Action Front bloc, leftist deputies Bassam Haddadin, Khalil Haddadin, Toujan Faisal and Mustafa Shneikat voted against the draft budget.

Deputies cut by JD 6 million the projected JD 66 million current expenditure for 1994 and deleted all references in the draft budget to the controversial sales tax. The Financial Committee recommended reference to the tax be dropped as it has not been approved by the legislature.

The House also approved most of the recommendations of the Financial Committee, which were endorsed separately from the articles of the budget.

Lawmakers added to the recommendations of the committee a proposal that would request the government to include in future draft budgets

He pointed out, however,

that the budget had an economic deficit which would appear if loans and grants are excluded from the projected revenues.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said the government will study the recommendations of the Financial Committee and will work in cooperation with the House to consolidate the democratic process in Saturday.

In addition to private claims, which had to be presented by the end of 1993, officials said Jordan expected to present at least another \$3 billion in state claims.

These have to be submitted by May 1.

"Jordan's individual claims of personal and material losses incurred during the Gulf crisis and filed to the United Nations compensation fund for victims of the Gulf crisis, Jordanian officials said Saturday.

He said that while deputies asked for salary increases for civil servants, reduction in foreign debt, and health insurance for all citizens, they also demanded that government reduce direct and indirect taxes, repay its debts and offer more subsidies.

Dr. Majali defended the economic plan of his government saying that it was drafted in a way that corresponded with the needs and aspirations of the Kingdom.

(Continued on page 5)

## Jordanian claims for Gulf war at least \$7b

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordanians who fled Kuwait after Iraq's 1990 invasion have submitted claims totalling over \$4 billion to a U.N. compensation fund for victims of the Gulf crisis, Jordanian officials said Saturday.

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(Continued on page 5)

## PLO: Syrian-Israeli progress will benefit all

CAIRO (Agencies) — Chief Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiator Nabil Shaath said from Tunis saying he was optimistic Sunday's U.S.-Syrian summit in Geneva would pave the way towards a Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese return to Middle East peace talks.

"If America takes up the issue (of the talks) and if Israel agrees to a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights as the door will open to Syrian flexibility, and subsequently, Jordan and Lebanon will return to the talks," he said Saturday.

The summit between U.S. President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart, Hafez Al Assad aims to retrack Israeli-Syrian talks in time for the scheduled resumption of the Middle East peace process in Washington on Jan. 24.

The negotiations have been deadlocked for two years. Syria wants an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan, but Israel says it will not discuss the extent of a pullout until Syria clarifies the nature of a possible peace agreement.

Jordanian individuals and families had filed over 65,000 claims, the officials said. The claimants represented nearly 90 per cent of the more than 350,000 Jordanians forced to leave Kuwait after Iraq's occupation of 1990.

They included some who left after the emirate was liberated, although the United Nations does not share Jordan's view that these people are entitled to compensation.

Nearly 713 Jordanians and Palestinians submitted claims

(Continued on page 5)

The PLO-Israel peace accord, negotiated in secret last year, angered Damascus, which says the deal has sidetracked Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese talks with Israel.

But last week it described the accord as the first step on the path to peace.

Dr. Shaath also said he hoped Israel would handle security issues in the next round of Tabu talks with the PLO with the flexibility it applied to civilian issues.

"I hope the Israeli delegation will not place obstacles in the way of the negotiations and that they will handle security issues in the way they handled civil issues so that there will be a chance for movement," Dr. Shaath told reporters at Cairo airport.

The Tabu talks, aimed at clearing the way to an Israeli withdrawal from occupied land originally planned for Dec. 13, resumed last Monday after weeks of squabbling over security arrangements.

The talks ended on Wednesday with progress reported on

(Continued on page 5)

## U.N. official, 10 others wounded in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A U.N. field worker from Chicago and 10 Palestinians were wounded in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, when Israeli soldiers opened fire to disperse stone throwers, Arab reporters said.

The American, identified as Terry Grace, 52, was shot in the leg and was in good condition at a Gaza City's Ahli Arab hospital, said a U.N. official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Rabin is not ready to publicly commit himself to a timetable. An announcement by Mr. Assad that he is ready for full peace may provide the right opportunity for Mr. Rabin to move on the Syrian track," said a European diplomat in Damascus.

Syria is insisting that any announcement of its readiness for full peace with Israel be conditional on the preparation of a clear timetable for a full Israeli withdrawal.

Such an announcement by Mr. Assad could give Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, under domestic pressure because of rising violence and stalled talks with the PLO, enough ammunition to

Mr. Clinton wants to pull

(Continued on page 5)

right door and hit Mr. Grace, who was sitting next to his Palestinian driver.

The Gaza Strip was paraded on Saturday by a general strike called by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in protest at the killing of five of its members.

Demonstrators hurled stones, burned tyres and blocked roads, sources said.

On Friday Israeli soldiers shot dead four Hamas members in the West Bank town of Hebron, after surrounding the house where they were

An Israeli army spokesman said the leader of the Hamas armed wing Ezzedin Al Qassam in the Hebron region was among those killed.

In another incident, a knife-wielding Hamas man stabbed to death a Russian immigrant on the edge of the Gaza Strip and wounded another Israeli on Friday before troops shot him dead.

Some 100 Hamas supporters marched through Gaza City's main thoroughfare, Omar Al Mukhtar street, chanting: "Stabbings, suicide attacks and car-bombs are our way to paradise."

## Priorities could converge in Geneva to lift Mideast logjam

# Middle East News

## Experts say Clinton should be cautious with Assad in Geneva

By Alan Elsner

Reuter

WASHINGTON — Veterans of past encounters say President Bill Clinton must be wary when he meets Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Geneva Sunday and avoid being drawn into too much detail.

This will only be the fourth meeting between a U.S. president and Syrian president and the first to take place against a background of an ongoing Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the three previous meetings, the United States was represented by Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and George Bush.

All three times, the man across the table was Syria's seemingly perennial leader, Mr. Assad. Twice, in the case of Mr. Nixon and Mr. Carter, he coaxed his U.S. interlocutors into saying things they may later have regretted.

"Assad is far more experienced and knowledgeable on the issues he cares about than any American he meets. It's very important for Clinton to know exactly what he wants out of the meeting," said William Quandt who advised Mr. Carter in his 1977 encounter with Mr. Assad and sat in on the meeting.

The main aim for Mr. Clinton is to reenergize the Middle East peace process, specifically by pressing Mr. Assad to inject more substance into the deadlocked Israeli-Syrian talks.

These negotiations, scheduled to resume in Washington

on Jan. 24, have essentially been at an impasse for two years over the same point.

Syria wants Israel to commit itself to full withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights but Israel says it will only discuss the extent of its withdrawal when Syria spouts out the kind of peace agreement it is prepared to offer in exchange.

Will it be peace in the narrow sense of non-belligerency, or will it include the establishment of diplomatic relations, economic and trade ties, tourism and cultural and sporting exchanges as Israel is demanding?

Bilaterally, Syria remains on the U.S. list of states supporting what Washington defines as global terrorism and is listed as a country which aids and abets the international drug trade.

Christopher visited Damascus and set up the summit, he found Mr. Assad willing to return to the talks.

Mr. Assad also offered Israel some minor gestures, allowing Syrian Jews to emigrate and permitting a U.S. team to search for Israeli soldiers missing in action in Lebanon.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Assad may approach the meeting with very different expectations. For Mr. Clinton, it is the final stop in a long and grueling trip which has included a NATO summit, important talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin and side trips.

For Mr. Assad on the other hand, this is his most important meeting of the year and possibly for several years. He has been planning his strategy and tactics for weeks.

By all accounts, Mr. Assad relishes his encounters with U.S. presidents and secretaries of state and is famous for subjecting them to two- or three-hour lectures on the history from the time of the Crusades to the present day.

Former Secretary of State James Baker called his meetings with Mr. Assad "bladder diplomacy" because it was considered bad form to leave the room for the toilet.

"Assad loves these meetings. He approaches them like a marathon and can be counted on to be in good shape," said Richard Haas, a Mideast adviser to former President George Bush, now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But by December, when Secretary of State Warren

strategically armed and bankrolled by the Soviet Union, Syria has lost its former superpower mentor and is now looking to the West to help reform its state-run economy.

This gives Mr. Clinton considerable leverage with Mr. Assad.

The peace process is likely to dominate the meeting. The United States had to work hard to keep Syria in the game over the past few months. Mr. Assad felt betrayed when the Israelis and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) unveiled a secret deal last September, negotiated without his knowledge.

But by December, when

Secretary of State Warren

## PLO arrests Gazan for alleged spying

TUNIS (AP) — Palestinian security agents have arrested a Palestinian man from the Israeli-occupied territories on charges of spying for Israel, sources said Saturday.

Ahmed Abu Ouf, 24, a native of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, was apprehended Monday in Tunis after arriving on a flight from London, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was the first time the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) arrested a resident of the occupied territories on charges of passing secrets to Israel since the movement transferred its main operation to Tunisia in 1982.

The arrest comes several months after the arrest of an alleged spy for Israel shook the organisation with fears that

Yasser Arafat's leadership apparatus is exposed to infiltration.

Such charges are sensitive as PLO is preparing for a limited autonomy in the West Bank town of Jericho and the Gaza Strip under its recent agreement with Israel.

The sources said the PLO had summoned Mr. Abu Ouf from London, where he was visiting a brother, but refused to say how.

Despite his alleged espionage, Mr. Abu Ouf will also be investigated for possible connections to the killings of PLO leaders in the Strip after the signing of the accord with Israel, the sources said.

It is not clear what role Mr. Abu Ouf had in the organisation, although his family is believed to have ties with Mr.

Arafat and his mainstream Fatah faction.

The sources said the PLO believes Mr. Abu Ouf was an important agent for the Israelis, supplying crucial information about PLO operations in Gaza.

Last November, Tunisian police arrested Adnan Yassin, deputy to Hakam Balawi, the PLO's representative to the Tunis government, on charges of spying for Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency.

He was later handed over to the PLO and has allegedly confessed, according to PLO sources.

The PLO believes thousands of Palestinians have collaborated with Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. Palestinian death squads have killed 789 of them.

## Shamir admits ordering death of terror colleague

TEL AVIV (R) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir admits in his memoirs that he ordered the killing of a colleague in a Jewish terror group fighting British authorities 50 years ago.

The victim, Eliyahu Giladi, was too ready to sacrifice human lives and had to be stopped. Mr. Shamir said in an excerpt of his memoirs published in *Yedioth Achronot* newspaper.

It has been widely charged but never proven that Mr. Shamir, as leader of the notorious anti-British Lehi or Stern gang, ordered the execution of his deputy Giladi in 1943.

"I am strong in my opinion I had no alternative — although the deed took a heavy personal price from me and cost me much suffering," Mr. Shamir said in the first of a series of excerpts of his forthcoming memoirs entitled "B'sicum Shel Davar" (in the final analysis).

Mr. Shamir, who was defeated by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 elections, said Mr. Giladi's proposals included inciting British soldiers to fire on Jewish demonstrators to increase public opposition to British rule in Palestine.

Mr. Giladi eventually talked about killing David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister after the Jewish state was created in 1948 and was assassinated.

Shamir said he began to fear

Giladi was "out of his mind."

"Before me stood a man who was seriously endangering the mere existence of Lehi and all that was connected to it... I knew I had to take a fateful decision — and I didn't evade it... the decision was taken and executed," Mr. Shamir wrote.

Mr. Shamir was one of three men who led the Lehi — the Hebrew acronym for freedom fighters for Israel — after British police killed its founder

Avraham Stern in 1942.

Lehi was the smallest and most hardline of three terror groups fighting for a Jewish state. It was known for assassinating high-ranking British officials.

There was an outcry in Sweden in 1988 when two Lehi veterans revealed their part in the 1948 killing of Sweden's Count Pehr Bernadotte. Bernadotte was the U.N.'s first mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Djerejian said American officials were planning to arrive in Israel by Sunday night to brief Mr. Rabin on the Geneva meeting.



STRANDED: An Afghan refugee girl Friday waits for her turn to board a United Nations truck in an attempt to enter Pakistan on the Afghanistan-Pakistani border (see page 10). Re-

ports said Saturday the thousands who were

waiting after Pakistan closed the border re-

turned to Jalalabad, midway between Kabul and

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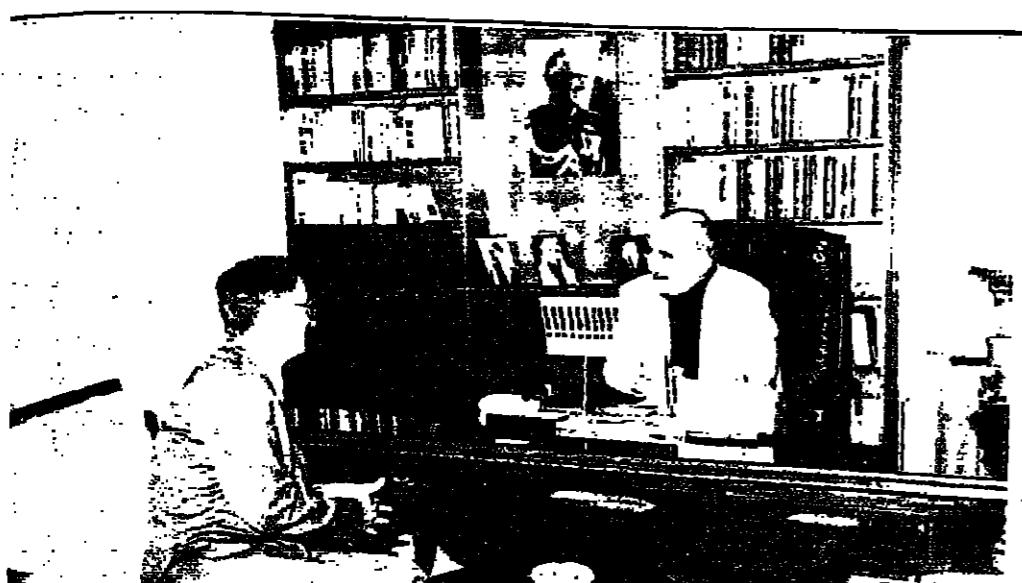
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DISCUSSING RADIO, TV PLANS: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, Legate, Saturday visited the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation and met with its director general, Radi Alkhas and his assistants. The Prince was briefed on the corporation's plans and production of programmes. He also toured part of the corporation's sections (Petra photo)

## Princess Basma leaves for meeting on development

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday called on the United Nations to corroborate its social, economic and environmental roles around the globe and help build up individual nations' capabilities in these fields.

The new facts emerging in a post cold war era bring out numerous challenges which call for increased United Nations attention, said Princess Basma shortly before leaving for New York to attend a special U.N.-organised meeting to discuss development.

The world organisation has set up a special high level advisory task force to help formulate concepts and future programmes for the United Nations development programme in the current decade.

The Princess stressed the need for new modern patterns of management and financing of socio-economic programmes and close cooperation among world nations.

said the Princess.

Among the issues emerging around the world in the post cold war era, said Princess Basma, are poverty, natural and environmental catastrophes, famine, refugees, and the break up of communities, all of which endanger mankind and world security.

The components of peace comprise human rights, respect of mankind's dignity, democracy and protection of the environment which, she said, go hand in hand with socio-economic development.

The Princess stressed the need for new modern patterns of management and financing of socio-economic programmes and close cooperation among world nations.

Thanking the United Nations for electing her as a member of the task force to deal with these questions, Princess Basma said her election represented an appreciation of Jordan as a country with pioneering experiments in the field of socio-economic development.



## Arab union officials seek to enhance work

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates of federations of labour unions from seven Arab countries gathered at the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman Saturday for a two-day workshop on workers' rights and means of bolstering the work of their unions.

Khaled Shreim, FJLU secretary general, welcomed the delegates who included representatives of labour unions in Palestine.

Mr. Shreim outlined Jordanian labour laws and regulations and workers' rights and privileges and rights.

Referring to the workshop, he said it was organised in view of the urgent need of the Arab labour unions for advice and guidance concerning labour-related problems, workers' rights in forming unions, and other topics.

Seminars, workshops and gatherings to discuss labour issues are legitimate methods of highlighting the rights of workers, he added.

According to Mr. Shreim, delegates will review several working papers on topics such as labour legislation, human rights, social and economic situations in the Arab region, and violations of workers' rights.

### HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Ialhas urges private hospitals to extend emergency care

#### RJ to fly to new Al Ain airport

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Director of Civil Aviation at Abu Dhabi International Airport Sheikh Hamdan Ben Mubarak Al Nahayan Saturday discussed with a delegation representing Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national air carrier, the inauguration of a new route between Jordan and Al Ain International Airport once it opens. Sheikh Mubarak voiced his delight over having RJ as one of the first airlines to use the airport. Jordanian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Awwad Abu Obeid, who was present at the meeting, said RJ's operation of the new route affirms the brotherly relations between Jordan and the UAE.

Yarmouk JUST heads meet Kirghiz minister

Yarmouk University President Mohammad Kamal Saturday received visiting minister of higher education in the Kirghiz Republic, Askar Kakiev, and discussed with him plans of establishing of scientific and academic cooperation between the university and universities in the new republic. Dr. Kamal briefed Mr. Kakiev and the accompanying delegation on the establishment and development of the university. Dr. Kakiev and the delegation also visited the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) where they were received by University President Kamel Al Ajlouni. Discussion at the meeting focused on academic cooperation between JUST and Kirghiz universities.

#### JPMC discusses 5-year plan

SHIDIYEH (Petra) — The board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Saturday held a meeting at its premises in Al Shidiyeh phosphate mines in southern Jordan and discussed the company's five-year development plans. Company Director General Sami Al Madani said, Mr. Madani said the meeting focused on financial matters in addition to issues pertaining to increasing the company's production. The board also discussed the prospect of expanding the Shidiyeh mines, the industrial complex in Aqaba and other projects.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

Centre.

★ Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artist and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh.

#### POETRY RECITAL

★ Recital of Ibrahim Nasrallah poems (to be sung by Kamal Khalil to lute music) at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talismans" at Baladina Art Gallery.

Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural

## Iraq to continue supplying oil to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq has agreed to continue supplying oil to Jordan under an exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council during talks in Baghdad last week between Jordan's energy and natural resources minister and Iraqi officials, informed sources said.

They said Minister Walid Asfour held a series of talks starting with Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad and other ministers as well as Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khuday.

Dr. Asfour also met with presidential adviser Jaafar Faraj, reports from Baghdad said.

"During the talks, Iraq agreed to renew the annual

agreement on oil supplies to Jordan and the accord could be formalised soon," said one source. No details of the agreement were immediately available; nor was it known whether it differed much from the 1993 accord.

Under a tacit exemption granted by the U.N. Security Council, which imposed a sweeping international embargo against Iraq following Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq is allowed to export oil to Jordan.

Jordan gets an average of 50,000 barrels of crude oil and 20,000 barrels of fuel oil from Iraq trucked overland daily to the Kingdom's refinery in Zarqa.

No cash is changing hands in the deal since the oil is supplied partly free and partly in

settlement of Iraqi debts to Jordan.

The sources said the main purpose of Mr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad, where he arrived Wednesday, was to renew the oil agreement and that he also held general discussions on Jordanian-Iraqi ties and prospects of cooperation after the expected lifting of sanctions.

The (Iraqi) government is highly hopeful that the sanctions could be lifted before April, although U.N. officials have said that it could not be done before June," said a diplomatic source.

According to the source, the Iraqi government, which accepted long-term monitoring of its weapons programme late last year after a protracted stand-off with the U.N., was focusing on the work of U.N.

inspectors in Iraq with a view to getting a clean certificate from them before March.

"Iraqi officials have been holding extensive discussions with representatives of major international oil companies on post-sanctions cooperation," said a highly-informed diplomat. "These included American as well European, particularly French and Italian firms.

Also expected to be raised during Dr. Asfour's visit to Baghdad was Jordanian concern over the impact of the reopening of Iraq's Umm Qasr Port on the flow of Iraq-bound cargo through Aqaba.

In talks in Amman in late November, Iraqi officials assured Jordan that the flow of Iraqi imports, which has dwindled to 20 per cent of pre-crisis levels, would con-

tinue and that Umm Qasr, Iraq's only outlet to the Gulf, would be used to accommodate small freighters with cargo from the far east.

The U.N. Security Council is due to meet on Tuesday to decide whether to maintain the international embargo against Iraq.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported late Saturday that Jordan and Iraq signed an agreement in which they agreed to cooperate in "all key oil industries, including excavating and digging."

The agreement covers bilateral cooperation in all the sectors of the oil industry, including drilling and exploration, along with Iraqi technical assistance for the Jordanian oil industry and training for Jordanian oil workers, INA said.

## AFM trading continues upward swing

Commercial banks benefit from doubling of trade volume

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) continued an upward swing, with the weekly volume doubling in two weeks, figures released by the market showed Saturday.

Shares worth JD26.565 million changed hands during the week ending Thursday compared with JD13.46 million in the previous week.

In the parallel market, where shares of companies with not-fully paid up capital are traded, the volume went down to JD2.32 million from JD2.77 million in what brokers described as a small indication of investors' shift to stocks of established companies.

Commercial banks were the main beneficiary in the surge in AFM trading, after investors zeroed in on them following the signing of the Jordan-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) economic cooperation accord on Jan. 7.

The banking sector accounted for more than 40 per cent of AFM trading in the last two weeks.

Among other things, the Jordan-PLO accord clears the way for the reopening of the branches of Jordanian commercial banks in the occupied West Bank, closed when Israel seized the territory in the 1967 war.

Shares of the Bank of Jordan,

one of the banks poised to reopen in the West Bank, closed Wednesday at JD4,890, compared with JD4,570.

Arab Bank shares went up an opening price of JD200 in the week but closed at JD191 on Wednesday. Brokers said the decline was partly because of official statements that banks will be only allowed to reopen their West Bank branches one by one.

The Arab Bank, Jordan's largest commercial bank, was earlier reported to be preparing to open more than 10 branches in the occupied territories.

Bankers and officials said one of the main reasons for the rise in the stock market was the lifting early this month of certain curbs on commercial bank credits. While the decision by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) did not immediately pump in huge amounts into the market, it did help boost investors' confidence in the national economy, they said.

Omaya Touqan, director-general of the AFM, was quoted as saying: "the increase in activities at the stock market is a result of the Central Bank of Jordan's decision, which boosted investor confidence, and the economic agreement signed between Jordan and the PLO."

"Both moves have created a kind of optimism that is

reflected in all trade and investment activities," Dr. Touqan said.

Brokers said it was also natural that investors' interest remains high in the beginning of the financial year when most firms release annual figures. As such, they said, there was always a minimum level of trading in stocks during January higher than earlier months.

This level, they said, was boosted by the additional factors that come into play after the recent CBJ moves and the Jordan-PLO agreement.

"It is a combination of factors," said a veteran broker.

ty over Jordan's role in the peace process and regional economy.

That uncertainty was cleared to a large extent by the signing of the Jordan-PLO agreement on economic cooperation.

"Of course, the signing of the Jordan-PLO economic agreement injected a fresh impetus into the market, but a lot remains unclear," said a banking official. "Investors are looking for some detailed insight into the actual economic role Jordan and the Jordanian private sector will be playing in the Jordanian economy."

## Jordan, Yemen sign customs memo

AMMAN (Petra) — A team from the Yemeni Customs Department Saturday wound up a nine-day visit to Jordan by signing a memorandum paving the way for cooperation with the Jordanian Customs Department in several fields.

Under the terms of the memorandum, Jordan and Yemen will exchange information related to smuggling operations and will coordinate efforts related to customs work, tariffs and other customs-related affairs.

The two sides also agreed to organise training courses for customs officers, exchange expertise and information related to technical work such as defining prices, analysis, classification, temporary entry of goods and the treatment of semi-finished industrial products.

The agreement also covered programmes for exchanges of visits by officials from the two sides and cooperation in upgrading administrative functions.

Yemen is to benefit from the Jordanian experiments in preparing lists of customs tariffs, airport customs work and customs operations at ports and border posts.

The memorandum was signed by Mohammad Jamal, director of customs and Abdul Rahman Kahali, head of the Yemeni Customs Department.

During the visit Mr. Kahali and his team toured the customs offices in Amman, Ramtha, the Zarqa and Aqaba free zones, Queen Alia International Airport as well as the Mudwara Customs Office in the southeast.

The Yemeni team later left for home.

## Minister to outline Kingdom's achievements in environmental protection at international forum

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Ahmad Akaileh Saturday said that he would present several working papers dealing with the environment in Jordan at an international meeting in Buenos Aires opening Monday.

The papers will outline Jordan's achievements with regard to environmental protection as provided for in the National Strategy on the Environment which was prepared in cooperation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The team will coordinate its stand with the other Arab delegations attending the meeting, especially in matters related to environmental planning, the creation of national parks, setting up of wild life reserves and legislation covering

the environment.

More than 3,000 delegates are expected to attend the international meeting which is held at the General Assembly level once every three years, according to Mr. Akaileh.

The delegation will take part in at least three workshops at the international gathering in the Argentine capital to discuss environmental-related issues, according to Mr. Akaileh.

The team will coordinate its stand with the other Arab delegations attending the meeting, especially in matters related to environmental planning, the creation of national parks, setting up of wild life reserves and legislation covering

## Police arrest theft suspect in Irbid governorate

IRBID (Petra) — Irbid police Saturday reported the arrest of a man suspected of stealing from cars.

Brigadier Hashem Al Qaisi, the police department director here, said that a search for the suspect was launched when the department received repeated complaints by car owners who reported that items left in their cars had been stolen or tampered with. The theft victims said their cars were parked in front of their homes.

At least 13 complaints were made at various police stations in Irbid governorate over the past few weeks, Brig. Qaisi added.

In the course of investigations, he said police placed a man, identified only as H.M. from Jerash district, under surveillance.

When police arrested the man, said the Brigadier, he was in possession of a gun.

According to Brig. Qaisi, the suspect was interrogated and admitted to stealing several items from cars including radio cassette players, cash and small bags as well as home appliances which he said he had found on a bus in Reimoun town, near Irbid.

Meanwhile in Amman the Public Security Department (PSD) Saturday reported that 43 road accidents occurred in Jordan in the first week of January, resulting in six deaths and injury to 389 persons.

In the course of investigations, he said police placed a man, identified only as H.M. from Jerash district, under surveillance.

SOUTH SHUNEH (Petra) — The Social Development Department in the South Shuneh district has given recurrent assistance worth JD 165,000 to 460 needy families during 1993, according to department director Mifleh Al Jagheer. Mr. Jagheer said the department has also presented urgent help to 12 needy families. The department, he added, also allocated JD52,000 income-generating projects for 43 poor families.

He said that the society will also publish daily bulletins of produce prices in international markets and the amounts and specifications of fruits and vegetables required in world markets.

The announcement coincided with a statement by the Agricultural Marketing Orga-

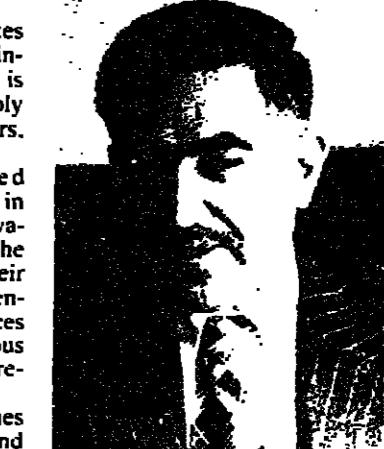
nisation (AMO) that Jordan's fruit and vegetable exports to foreign and some Arab states increased noticeably last year.

AMO Director General Salem Lawzi said that Jordan's exports of these products increased by 22.4 per cent to non-Arab states, 9.2 per cent to Bahrain, 19 per cent to Lebanon, 17 per cent to Qatar and 15 per cent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The society will begin on research, management and encouragement of exports of new types of fruits and vegetables, advise farmers on modern means of harvesting crops, as well as packaging and transporting produce, said the spokesman.

At the same time, Jordan's imports of fruits and vegetables in 1993 dropped by around 38.8 per cent over the previous year.

Jordan, he said, imported onions, dates, apricots, apples, potatoes, cherries and grapes last year.





## Things can get hairy off-piste

By Tim McGirk

I TOLD my Tibetan cook that I was going to Kashmir to search by helicopter for a beast whose tracks — larger than a man's — had been spotted by a Swiss ski guide near the summit of a 4,000m Himalayan peak. "It's the yeti," said Dolma matter-of-factly. Then she gave me a useful piece of advice. "Yeti's very angry. If yeti starts chasing you, never run up the mountain — always go down," Dolma said.

Why, I asked. My Tibetan cook replied with unfailing logic: "Yeti has long, long hair and when he runs down, hair falls in his eyes and he cannot see where he is going."

Whenever I told friends that I was off to look for weird animal tracks, they either laughed or offered strange bits of yeti-lore. In Nepal several years back, I learnt, a Japanese tourist tried to buy a yeti scalp that was among sacred objects in a remote Buddhist monastery. It is hard to say what one could do with a yeti scalp — use it as a tea cosy? — but anyway the abbot refused. That same night the red, shrivelled and hairy scalp was stolen, and the Japanese tourist was never seen again.

Someone else told me of a shepherd attacked one night by a creature larger than a bear. It burst into his hut and would have torn him apart if the dogs hadn't driven it off. This is supposed to have taken place in the same Kashmir range of the Himalayas where the ski guide found the mysterious tracks.

The only person who did not seem prepared to jump to the conclusion that the tracks belonged to the abominable snowman was the man who discovered them, Sylvain Saudan. "I don't know what kind of animal they belong to, but I'd like to find out," said Saudan, a skier and mountaineer. He had sent photographs of the tracks to the Natural Museum in Paris and to another museum in Munich requesting identification. "Both places said that although their studies were not conclusive, the tracks did not correspond to any known animal," says Saudan, who also sent copies of the photos to the National Geographic.

### Priorities could converge in Geneva

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Assad and Mr. Rabin out of the "you-first" cycle.

"The major strategic issues between Israel and Syria have already been resolved. It will be an opportunity in Geneva for Assad to explain what peace will mean when he gets guarantees of an Israeli pullout," said the diplomat.

Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam said two weeks ago that recognition of and normalisation with Israel are negotiable. Mr. Rabin followed up on the comment saying he was ready to discuss full peace for full withdrawal.

Mr. Assad is unlikely to let Mr. Clinton down. He knows that the peace process has as much to do with Syrian-American relations as it does with Syrian-Israeli relations. In return for Mr. Assad's announcement, Mr. Clinton will likely stress the importance of Syria in the peace process and offer to play a full partner in Syrian-Israeli talks.

When the issue of Lebanon comes up in the three-hour meeting, Mr. Assad has no serious problems: Both Israel and the U.S. have tacitly accepted Syrian dominance of its neighbour and today Lebanon is treated as an afterthought.

In his travel last month to get the parties back to the negotiating table, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met twice with Mr. Assad; twice with Yasser Arafat; and once with King Hussein. Rafik Al Hariri, the

Society in Washington and awaits its reply. "Judging from the prints, the Paris experts think this animal weighed about 48 kgs," Mr. Saudan says.

A robust, strong-jawed man in his fifties, Mr. Saudan is known in France and Switzerland as *skieur de l'impossible* for his daredevil exploits. He made his reputation skiing down near-vertical mountains in the Alps and Himalayas, where a fall meant instant death.

Now Mr. Saudan is running an outfit called Himalaya Heli-ski, which flies out of Kashmir. His clients are very, very rich European and Americans; they own department stores, factories and banks. They are the kind of people who collect antique Ferraris or who can afford to bring their private ski instructor with them to Kashmir (a week's heli-skiing costs £3,700). They are not your usual crack-brained abominable snowman hunters.

"I don't believe in yeti legends," says Mr. Saudan carefully, "but it's hard to think that in mountains as immense as the Himalayas there isn't something out there that we don't know about."

On 3 May 1991 at 10 a.m., Mr. Saudan spotted a new peak that looked ideal for skiing. It was high, more than 4,000m, with a broad, sweeping descent. There was no wind, and in the shadows cast by the rocky summit, the snow was still feathery. The pilot, Gilles Verdan, eased down the helicopter on the mountain's broad shoulder, about 100 metres from the summit. Mr. Saudan, along with another guide, Daniel Semblant, from Chamonix in France, and three other companions jumped out with their bundles of skis and poles. When the blizzard whipped up by the departing helicopter cleared, they had a fine view of the Himalayas. Then, not more than 20 metres from where the helicopter had left them, the skiers noticed the strange animal tracks.

"From a distance, I thought these are a man's tracks," recalls Mr. Saudan. "But there was no reason for a man to be up there — the nearest village was a three-day walk." He added: "This creature did not take the easy way up the mountain, otherwise we would

have seen its tracks, all the way up. No, this creature seems to have climbed up the back side of the mountain — a 1,000m wall of rock and ice. A bear couldn't have done it, and a man could only have done it if he had ropes and his name was Reinhold Messner."

Exhasted, Mr. Saudan and his companions followed the tracks upwards, leaving behind the Moghul gardens and mustard fields and headed towards Tibet, entering into the vast, towering whiteness of the mountains. Gazing at the Himalayas, which cover thousands of square miles from Bhutan up to Afghanistan, Mr. Saudan and I talked of why, if a yeti does exist, it is not seen more often. "Most of the mountain people have no reason to go up into the peaks. They don't really know what's up there." The only humans who do venture deep into the Himalayas are mountaineers, says Mr. Saudan, but they are only interested in peaks above 5,000 metres, where there is little oxygen and no small animals or plants to sustain a 48 kg creature. The yeti, or whatever it is, evidently does not share man's desire to conquer mountains.

Mr. Saudan and his companions measured the tracks, which were bigger than a ski boot, and snapped off about 80 photographs. Seven skiers, the helicopter pilot and co-pilot all saw the tracks. The creature had walked up within easy range of the summit, then veered across the face of it before disappearing down the same sheer cliff of rock and ice. "A man never would have done that — a man would have climbed to the top and had a look around, after all that effort," Mr. Saudan says.

The party radioed back to the helicopter. Mr. Gilles, the pilot, zoomed down the back of the mountain and picked up the mysterious tracks as they crossed a wide snowfield. "I lost the trail in the rocks, and from there on down the valley it was all wooded." After 30 minutes, they called off the helicopter hunt. "I had the impression that he knew we were there and organised himself to get lost very quickly," Mr. Gilles says.

Mr. Saudan warned me that I would require the strongest possible luck to see this creature — or even its footprints — during two days' flying. We met at Himalaya Heli-ski's base at the Hotel Centaur, set in the fruit orchards on the far side of Dal lake from Srinagar. Apart from Saudan's skiing clients, the hotel's other guests were all military officers. Indian security forces are fighting against Muslim separatists in the National Geographic.

I cannot look at a mountain covered with snow, anywhere, without imagining how I would ski down it. After flying for an hour, the temptation to give up the yetis and put on skis grew unbearable. Finally, Mr. Saudan directed the pilot to a south-facing peak, and the helicopter deposited us

Kashmir, and at night, the sound of gunfire drifted across the lake from the old city. Few tourists dare venture into Kashmir these days.

The helicopter rippled across the lake, and we looped upwards, leaving behind the Moghul gardens and mustard fields and headed towards Tibet, entering into the vast, towering whiteness of the mountains. Gazing at the Himalayas, which cover thousands of square miles from Bhutan up to Afghanistan, Mr. Saudan and I talked of why, if a yeti does exist, it is not seen more often. "Most of the mountain people have no reason to go up into the peaks. They don't really know what's up there." The only humans who do venture deep into the Himalayas are mountaineers, says Mr. Saudan, but they are only interested in peaks above 5,000 metres, where there is little oxygen and no small animals or plants to sustain a 48 kg creature. The yeti, or whatever it is, evidently does not share man's desire to conquer mountains.

There were no yeti tracks, but I was past caring. The skiing was easier than I had imagined; a French couple in their mid-sixties, after initial jitters, were first into the helicopter, clambering for a second run. We made nine runs down four mountains that day, about 30 kilometres of uninterrupted skiing. I had the wild impulse to withdraw all my life savings, pawn my furniture and have my children go without supper and shoes, just so that I could go again and again. Heli-skiing in the Himalayas is exquisitely addictive.

That evening, Mr. Saudan showed me photographs of the tracks, but he refuses to let them be published until the National Geographic Society has analysed them. "If National Geographic say they know what kind of creature made the tracks — a bear or something — then I'll drop the matter," Mr. Saudan claims. And if it is a yeti?

"I don't want to capture it. I've always thought this vast world of mountains is not like a dead, icy planet, and that it contains animals unknown to us. Maybe big ones. It would be enough to have proof that this creature does exist. But I'm not going to go charging off looking for it," Mr. Saudan says, laughing.

"The Himalayas are a big place. It's enough to see its footprints" — The Independent.



Pristine slopes for daring skiers in the Himalayas

### House endorses draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

Lebanese prime minister, had to make due with a telephone call.

To guarantee Israel security on its northern border, Syria has to curb the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Mr. Assad now has a greenlight from Tehran to do just that, according to diplomats. Iranian officials assured Damascus it will maintain its strong ties with Syria even if it disrupts Hezbollah and even if it signs a peace deal with Israel.

It joined seven other Arab states in describing the Israeli-PLO deal as the first step on the path to peace.

Syria, harshly critical of the PLO's secret deal with Israel, made a volte-face last week.

It joined seven other Arab states in describing the Israeli-PLO deal as the first step on the path to peace.

The prime minister said the administrative reform and decentralisation programmes would lead to the creation of an effective bureaucracy and would be accompanied by legislation that would facilitate their success.

Responding to criticism about Jordan's intention to join the GATT agreement, Dr. Majali said the Kingdom would join the agreement only under terms acceptable to it and in harmony with its policies.

Dr. Majali also said the government plays a strong role in the economy, pointing out that the government's expenditure amounts to 35 per cent of the GDP and the public sector employs about 40 per cent of the labour force.

He said Jordan's foreign debt had to be paid because the country stood to suffer more if it defaulted on paying back its debts.

President of the Finance Committee Ali Abul Ragheb said that some deputies were influenced by ideological beliefs in their discussion of the budget, rejecting the accusations that the panel's recommendations were not adequate.

The draft budget law will now be referred to the Upper House of Parliament. It will become law after it is approved by the Senate and signed by His Majesty the King.

The sales tax law will be offered to the House for approval after being endorsed by the Cabinet. "You will debate, and you will have the right to approve, amend or reject it, whatever you see fit for the national interest."

The government has updated the currency exchange law to make it fit the needs of

the present time and suit investment requirements. The government has prepared a study on the establishment of a corporation for guaranteeing deposits and is working on a draft law on monitoring the work of banks and expanding the Central Bank's role in this regard.

The economic restructuring programme aims to achieve a six per cent growth in the GDP at constant rates and between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent during the programme's period from 1994-98.

The Ministry of Finance has taken measures to achieve a comprehensive tax reform through revising the income tax, customs duty and the sales tax laws to reduce the burdens shouldered by citizens and to make them clearly understood by investors.

The government will refer to the Lower House amendments on the laws of investment encouragement, companies and the investments encouragement department to make them fit the current era and to attract investors.

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me will also enable Jordan to get additional financial support in the form of grants and soft loans from other countries and international and regional organisations to address the gap in the balance of payments, which is estimated at about \$400 million annually, and this will help stabilise the Jordanian dinar exchange rates and increase Jordan's reserves of hard currency.

— This budget is the first since 1963 which does not show an additional deficit after adding the expected grants and loans.

### PLO upbeat over Geneva summit

(Continued from page 1)

Israel was stalling.

"This might be because they are waiting for results of the Assad-Clinton summit or because we didn't accept the Cairo paper as a final agreement," he said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said as negotiations in Cairo ended Dec. 30 that "a meeting of the minds" was reached on introducing autonomy in Gaza and Jericho. The Israelis later portrayed it as a full-fledged agreement, which the PLO is quick to deny particularly on the question of border control.

He will also hand Mr. Arafat a letter from President Hosni Mubarak on "Egyptian support for the Palestinian issue."

Dr. Shaath said he was going to Tunis to attend a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee, due to start there Saturday and brief PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat on the Tabia talks, which are due to resume on Monday.

He will also hand Mr. Arafat a letter from President Hosni Mubarak on "Egyptian support for the Palestinian issue."

Dr. Shaath, a top Arafat aide who leads the PLO delegation to the talks, charged in an interview with Egypt's Middle East news agency that

the budget and the 1994 budget shows a deficit of about JD 156 million, which might rise to JD 456 million if Jordan repays some of its debts. The deficit is estimated to be 5.8 per cent of the GDP in 1994, and this percentage is expected to drop to 5.3 per cent at the end of 1994.

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## Word must stem population to feed itself, report says

WASHINGTON (R) — The world appears near the limit of its ability to produce more food, and its exploding population must be controlled if people are to be adequately fed in coming decades, the Worldwatch Institute said in a report released Saturday.

"Growth in food production has slowed dramatically as the earth's ability to produce is being pushed to its limits, soil and water resources are being degraded and exhausted, and benefits from new technologies are diminishing," the annual "State of the World" report by the Washington think tank said.

"Achieving a humane balance between food and people now depends more on family planners than on farmers," said Lester Brown, Worldwatch president and the report's senior author.

Mr. Brown said the "growing demand for food and the earth's physical capacity to

satisfy those needs may dominate the next four decades as much as ideological conflict dominated the four decades from 1950 to 1990."

At a news briefing, Mr. Brown said this year's report was unusually grim because "we have enough data now.

Unfortunately, now I think we can see more of the constraints emerging more clearly," including a leveling off in grain yields and in the seafood catch.

This comes as the world's population is projected to jump by 3.6 billion, or 90 million annually, in the next 40 years.

"Seldom has the world faced an unfolding emergency whose dimensions are as clear as the growing imbalance between food and people," Mr. Brown said.

He said a growing awareness of the earth's limited capacity to produce food calls for reevaluating population policies, and increasing international

efforts to make family planning measures available.

The per capita seafood catch, which fell nine per cent from 1989 to 1993, likely will continue to drop, the report said.

Grain production, which expanded nearly three per cent annually between 1950 and 1984, since then has dropped to about one per cent annual growth — largely because expanded use of fertiliser no longer is yielding big returns.

Mr. Brown cited shrinking world rice stocks as Asia's consumption has outpaced production for the last three years and said Japan's farmers have not been able to increase yields over the last decade despite tremendous economic incentives.

"With grain yields now plateauing in some countries, with the fish catch unlikely to increase much, if at all, and with rangelands widely overgrazed, there is an urgent need

for national assessments of population-carrying capacity," the report said.

Mr. Brown recommended a global effort to assess food needs versus population growth for the next 40 years to provide "information needed to establish a public dialogue on choices in the tradeoff between family size and consumption levels."

"Without this global effort, countries with soaring import needs will have no way of knowing whether exportable supplies will be available," the report said.

And, Mr. Brown said, a global effort is needed to make family planning services available to all who want them.

He said a measure often cited as a key to feeding more people — cutting use of grain to feed livestock in the industrial countries and increasing food assistance to the developing world — would have little impact.

## Oman authorises banks to raise \$300m loan

MANAMA (R) — Oman has authorised a group of four banks to arrange a \$300 million five-year syndicated loan, the sultanate's first sovereign borrowing in more than two years, bankers have said. The credit will be used for general purposes, helping to finance the budget deficit — forecast to be close to \$800 million in 1994 — as well as development projects, they said.

The four arranging banks are the Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank (GIB), the Chase Manhattan Bank N.A. of the United States, Commerzbank A.G. of Germany and Japan's the Bank of Tokyo Ltd. Oman, which produces about 760,000 barrels per day of oil, has suffered from falling oil prices like other petroleum exporters.

Discussions on this loan began several months ago before the sharp fall in prices. Its last loan, also for five years and \$300 million, was signed in October 1991.

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Jeffrey Sachs, the Harvard economist who advised President Boris Yeltsin, said Friday Western aid had failed to head off growing popular discontent in Russia because it did nothing to curb inflation.

In an interview with Reuters, Mr. Sachs was sharply critical of all aid packages offered so far, including one pledged by U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Moscow last week.

Mr. Sachs, who works as an economic consultant for Mr. Yeltsin, said the best way to stabilise Russia's tottering economy would be to control inflation by using Western money to help shrink the state budget deficit, estimated this year at \$24 billion.

He said the Group of Seven (G-7) nations, the world's richest industrial countries, should put together a \$14 billion Western cash infusion to replace the piecemeal approach to aid the West had been following so far.

On Friday, the Clinton administration promised to work with G-7 countries to free up \$1.5 billion in International Monetary Fund (IMF) credits already planned as part of a Western aid package.

"(This) package...isn't really designed towards what I think is the greatest risk that the Russians face and what we face, which is continuing very high inflation and high social instability in Russia," Mr. Sachs said.

"So, the nature of the package would have to be altered," he pointed out.

U.S. officials also said they were seeking additional funds from international banks for unemployment and hardship programmes to help cushion the speed of reform in Russia.

But Mr. Sachs said these measures were inadequate not only because they fell short of the amount needed, but because the IMF-centred approach avoided the primary problem of monetary instability.

Mr. Sachs' Russian recipe for reform calls for stabilising the rouble by helping the government to stop printing money to finance the budget deficit. But he said the IMF refused to consider direct financing of the deficit because it first required politically sensitive cuts of up to 10 per cent in gross national product (GDP).

"They (the IMF) are living in a dream world, it (the IMF approach) is just not realistic," he said. "And so one has to make a realistic programme but actually put the numbers on the table. I doubt that even today in these meetings with Clinton...that this kind of scenario is being talked about."

Mr. Sachs, who was in Prague as the keynote speaker at

an international bond conference, said a G-7 backed \$14 billion financial aid package, including either a direct loan or buying long-term Russian bonds, would remove half the expected 1994 budget deficit.

Moderate cuts in industrial subsidies would be offset by an increase in social safety-net spending, he said. The parallel sale of domestic Russian bonds would leave only about two per cent of GNP to be financed by printing money.

Mr. Sachs said a huge anti-Western backlash was building up in Russia because of a glaring discrepancy between Western promises of aid and Western delivery. Not more than \$5 billion of some \$28 billion in promised Western aid was delivered in 1993.

Leading Russian newspapers

Friday ridiculed the amount of economic aid visiting President Clinton was offering Russia.

Noting Mr. Clinton's offer of about \$1 billion in new aid for the fiscal year, the liberal daily Segodnya newspaper said, "the sum is simply pathetic."

Mr. Clinton said Friday he would ask Congress for \$900 million in new aid to Russia in his budget for the next fiscal year, on top of \$2.5 billion voted for the current year.

He also said the United States would purchase \$12 billion worth of highly enriched uranium from Moscow over the next 20 years, and would provide technical assistance to help cushion the impact of economic reform on the Russian people.

Some Russian newspapers didn't seem to take the visit too seriously.

Rabochaya Tribuna, which

means worker's tribune, ignored the summit.

## Sachs says Western aid to Russia fails inflation test

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## Labour unrest in CFA zone may worsen with devaluation

ABIDJAN (R) — Devaluation of the CFA franc threatens to aggravate rising labour unrest in West and Central African states whose governments already have trouble meeting wage bills.

In theory, the parity adjustment from 50 to 100 to the French franc announced Tuesday night will give governments more cash in CFA terms to meet wage bills, but price rises for imports are also likely to trigger bigger wage demands.

Regional economists say while devaluation could boost industry in Cameroon and improve export earnings for Ivory

Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, it may only increase problems in poorer Sahel countries like Niger, Chad and Mali which depend on imports.

Ivory Coast is one of the franc zone's wealthier members but has been finding it increasingly hard to meet wage bills and suffered strikes in several sectors in late 1993.

The government came up with 30 billion CFA francs (\$102 million) at the end of the year to pay arrears in wages, student grants and retirement pensions.

The windfall prompted specu-

lation in the opposition daily La Voie as to whether the cash was a legacy from president Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who died on Dec. 7, a contribution from his wealthy successor Henri Konan Bedie, or aid from France.

In Chad, where provincial civil servants have not been paid for more than a year and the government has no cash to meet its wage bill, a public sector strike began on Jan. 3.

The government promised to pay two months' wages after France came up with 33.5 million French francs (\$5.7 million).

But the civil servants are still on strike because they say

officials in N'Djamena have received some of the cash and those in the provinces have nothing.

Cameroon's civil service has been paralysed for a month by a strike over a 50 per cent wage cut announced last November.

State radio said Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu issued a strongly worded communiqué calling on strikers to return to work without delay and warning of unspecified measures to sanctions anyone who refused.

The students' grants have not been paid for eight months. In January 1993, the university cancelled teaching for the academic year because

are closed or maintaining only emergency cover. Magistrates went on strike at the beginning of the year.

In neighbouring Central African Republic, striking customs workers complain they have not been paid for 15 months.

Further north in landlocked Niger, the government closed Niamey University Friday after students hurling stones and petrol bombs battled riot police firing tear gas.

The students' grants have not been paid for eight months. In January 1993, the university cancelled teaching for the academic year because

of lack of funds.

Economists say with falling prices for its principal export, uranium, and manufacturing dependent on imports, Niger stands to lose from devaluation.

The CFA franc has been pegged at 50 to the French franc since 1948. In the past decade, a combination of falling commodity prices, loose fiscal and monetary policy and the appreciation of the French franc against the dollar has pushed up the CFA franc's value against other currencies and loss of competitiveness has

paralysed regional economies.

After 46 years of unchanged parity against the French franc, Ivory Coast and 12 other West and Central African states on Tuesday devalued their common currency, the CFA franc, by 50 per cent.

Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan announced price rises for petrol and rice but maintained his government's resolutely upbeat approach despite fears of inflation and labour unrest.

"When your mother put alcohol on your wounds it hurt but you knew it was for your long-term good," he said.

But at a three-hour news conference, he said social peace was essential for the rebuilding of the economy to succeed.

In a veiled warning to labour leaders already wanting big pay increases, Mr. Duncan quoted late president Felix Houphouet-Boigny's maxim that disorder would not be tolerated.

Failure will undermine efforts in the rest of the CFA zone.

"This is going to work. There will be no failure," top World Bank official Olivier Lafourcade told reporters in Abidjan.

But the history of devaluations in non-CFA countries has been no great success and was for years France's argument for resisting any change in the CFA parity.

While the rich with money abroad get richer, victims include civil servants and young people hit by plunging levels of public spending on education and health. Price controls have usually failed and high inflation resulted.

Africa's political instability and weak infrastructure have deterred the predicted flood of foreign investors. Rich Afri-

cans with money abroad have tended to invest it abroad.

Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, believes it can break the mould with the backing of Western partners.

The government sharply raised prices paid to cocoa and coffee farmers with Mr. Duncan making clear he was more concerned about the welfare of rural Ivorians than city-dwellers.

The government announced salary increases for civil servants of between five and 15 per cent, much less than the inflation rate projections of government economists.

Private sector workers will have to negotiate the best deal they can with employers.

"We have already asked for 25 per cent," said Raymond Djadou, head of the Bank Workers' Union.

"We know we cannot expect full compensation for devaluation but we will not accept a 50

per cent drop in our buying power," he said, voicing widespread fears that the government will be unable to control prices.

"The government closed down the Prosumo Group's shops in Abidjan until further notice," said a manager at Hayat-Ivoire, the group's smartest supermarket where wealthy expatriates and Ivorians buy French delicacies like fresh oysters and champagne.

Prices for both imported and local goods have soared in most of the 13 West and Central African countries which devalued their French-backed CFA by 50 per cent Tuesday.

Traders say they have to increase to settle outstanding bills to foreign suppliers or to finance new stocks.

Ivory Coast's employers' body CNPI asked the government on Friday for urgent guidance on prices and incomes policy.

Many businesses will prefer to shut down temporarily rather than sell at a loss.

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## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



# Economy

## Algeria seen heading towards deal with IMF

ALGIERS (R) — Despite the risk of aggravating its civil strife, Algeria appears to be heading toward an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sources close to the discussions said Friday.

"They have made progress on three key issues — devaluation, the removal of some price controls and the removal of price subsidies," said one source. "They (the IMF) feel that they can get an agreement relatively soon, say within three months."

Caught between foreign debt service, which eats up about \$9 billion each year, and depressed oil prices that may cut its export earnings below this level, Algeria late last year resumed talks with the IMF for a balance of payments support

loan.

In exchange, the IMF is pushing the country to reform its heavily state-controlled economy.

An Algerian technical team

is due in Washington later this month for the next round of talks, which is likely to be followed by a new IMF visit to Algiers, said another source.

"I don't think that the talks are likely to drag on," he said.

"But they (the IMF) will need to go back to Algiers...they need to have meetings at ministerial level to decide some issues."

The talks with the IMF, and the painful reforms that an

agreement will probably entail,

are particularly delicate for Algeria because of the civil strife that has gripped the

country for two years.

Economy Minister Mourad Benachenhou last week said Algeria would only make reforms it believed the country could stand, politically and socially.

But diplomats said that although the authorities are deeply worried about the social impact of reform, they had few options.

"The Algerians are very wary of pouring oil on what is already a smouldering fire," said a senior diplomat. "But what choice do they have?"

"They have no choice," said another diplomat. "At some point they simply will not have the money to pay the debt."

Prime Minister Redha Malek admitted as much last month. He said that of oil prices continued to fall Algeria would no longer be able to afford the service on its \$25.7 billion foreign debt.

Algeria must find a way to cut its \$9 billion annual debt

service in half, he said.

The country hopes to do so by what it calls "multilateral reprofiling," essentially asking selected creditors for bilateral debt relief while continuing to pay back others.

But diplomats said they did not think many of Algeria's main creditors, despite sympathy for its difficulties, would agree to give debt relief while other creditors continued to get paid.

"We wouldn't be willing to do a bilateral deal," said an official with one of Algeria's leading creditors. "If they do bilateral debt it simply is not fair burden-sharing."

As a result, diplomats say Algeria will probably have to accept a Paris Club debt rescheduling.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said last week he was optimistic that Algeria would sign an accord precisely because such options are no longer unthinkable.

## India hikes price of cooking gas

NEW DELHI (AP) — Trying to improve its own books, the Indian government has upset many household budgets by raising the price of cooking gas.

It has announced a hike of 15 rupees (50 cents) on each cylinder of liquefied petroleum gas, to 94 rupees (\$3). Gas, which is under government control, is the staple fuel for most urban kitchens. An average family uses two 14-kilogramme cylinders a month.

The government said by reducing its subsidy on cooking gas, it will save 2.38 billion rupees (\$80 million) annually. But it will be an extra burden for middle-class families already struggling to keep pace with an estimated nine per cent annual inflation rate. India has been under pressure from international lenders to reduce its budgetary deficit.

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stocks sector surged by nearly 24 per cent in 1993 as an economic upswing boosted prices of shares of all trading institutions, dealers have said.

Market capitalisation of the 22 banks and companies tracked by an unofficial share index jumped to 37.8 billion dirhams (\$10.3 billion) from 30.5 billion dirhams (\$8.3 billion) in 1992, they said.

It stood at 28.1 billion dirhams (\$7.6 billion) in 1991, and 24.3 billion dirhams (\$9.34 billion) in 1990.

The index set up by the National Bank of Abu Dhabi in 1989 with a base of 1,000 points, also soared by around 22 per cent to 2,030.32 points on Jan. 1, from 1,654.20 points on Jan. 1, last year.

"It is the biggest increase ever registered in the UAE stock market," said Zuhair Kaswani, a leading stockbroker. "It's due to an economic

upturn and expectations most banks and companies will make record profits."

Economists attributed the business upswing to a surge in trade, the pillar of operations of most banks, and a large increase in 1993 government spending, which reached a 10-year high of 17.6 billion dirhams (\$4.7 billion).

Government expenditure in the UAE and other oil-rich Gulf nations has remained the driving force in the domestic economy given the relatively limited contribution by the private sector.

No figures were available on UAE trade for 1993 but it hit a record high in the first nine months of the year in Dubai, the main commercial centre in the Gulf.

Official reports showed it reached 46.4 billion dirhams (\$12.6 billion), most of which were imports from Japan, India and other countries. Officials said the increase in

trade was due to a sharp rise in Dubai's reexports to neighbouring Iran and Kuwait, which are engaged in post-war reconstruction.

The reexport stood at 1.9 billion dirhams (\$517 million) and 686 million dirhams (\$187 million) respectively.

The UAE has no official market but the federal cabinet last week approved a memorandum from the economy and trade ministry on plans to set up an exchange.

Sharedealing is conducted by telephone through a handful of authorised brokers, who often complain of widespread manipulation.

This has scared away small investors and boosted domestic liquidity to a record 85 billion dirhams (\$23.1 billion) at the end of November.

Dealers said they expected another busy year in 1994 as the government has announced it has no plans to cut expenditure despite weak oil prices.

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21 Karat

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Currency

Bid

Offer

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0.7070

## Sarajevo shelling eases after Bosnia threatens to boycott talks

SARAJEVO (R) — Shelling eased in the besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo Saturday after the Bosnian prime minister threatened to pull out of Geneva peace talks.

But rivals continued fighting in central Bosnia, cutting off aid routes where the United Nations said it had to use force to extricate a blocked convoy.

After a day of shelling by Serbs marking their Orthodox New Year in which six people were killed, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic threatened to boycott peace talks in Geneva next week unless the shelling of Sarajevo stopped.

Sarajevo Radio said Friday: "Speaking about the future of the Geneva talks, Silajdzic stressed that if the aggressor continues to destroy Sarajevo and other towns and to kill civilians during the Geneva talks, the talks will not be held."

Bosnia's Serb, Muslim and Croat factions are due to meet in the Swiss city next week to try to end the 21-month-old conflict. Talks between Muslims and Croats in Bonn this week ended without agreement.

**Duchess of Kent converts to Catholicism**

LONDON (R) — Cardinal Basil Hume, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, Friday received the Duchess of Kent into the Roman Catholic Church after she left the establishment by deciding to leave the Church of England.

The Duchess Katharine was the first British royal to convert since King Charles II, who turned to Catholicism on his deathbed in 1685. In doing so, she went against an early 18th century law forbidding members of the monarchy from becoming Catholic.

The historic 45-minute ceremony was carried out by Cardinal Hume in a private ceremony at the archbishop's house, near the houses of parliament in central London, and the Duchess, 60, was accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Kent, who is grand master of the Mason's United Grand Lodge of England.

During the ceremony, the deeply religious Duchess made a simple pledge to adopt her new faith: "I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God."

Cardinal Hume said afterwards: "She seemed very peaceful and at ease." Asked what the occasion meant for the Church of England, the cardinal would only say: "I have been through a marvellous spiritual experience tonight and I want to leave it at that."

Britain's monarch, Queen Elizabeth, is the head of the Church of England, created in the 16th century after Henry VIII broke with Rome so that he could divorce and remarry, and the duchess needed special permission to leave the church.

As well as her husband, Edward, who is 18th in line to Queen Elizabeth's throne, the duchess was accompanied by their three children in the ceremony.

A spokesman for the elegant and popular duchess said her move had nothing to do with the Church of England's decision to ordain women priests, which has alienated many churchgoers and prompted some of them to join the Catholic Church.

Traditionally, a member of the royal family who has married a Catholic has had to renounce any claim to the throne, but because the duchess was an Anglican at the time of her marriage the Duke of Kent's position will be unaffected.

Their son renounced his right to succession when he married Canadian Catholic divorcee Sylvana Tomaselli in 1988.

The Anglican Church's spiritual head, George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called the duchess's step a "personal decision of a devout Christian on a spiritual journey."

Friends of the duchess, seen every year by tennis fans handing out trophies at the Wimbledon tournament, said her conversion to Catholicism was purely personal.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Over 100 die in India boat collision

CALCUTTA (R) — More than 100 people were feared drowned when two pilgrim boats collided in the Bay of Bengal Saturday and one was torn in half, police said. One of the steam launches, the Ma Abhaya, was split in two by the collision and around 150 passengers were spilled into the water as they returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Sagar Island, they said. They said 21 passengers and three crew had been found alive, but there appeared little hope for the rest even though divers were still searching. The collision occurred some 90 kilometres south of Calcutta in the early hours of the morning in thick fog, which hampered initial rescue work. Some 15 hours later, just 10 bodies, nine of them women, had been found. The two halves of the Ma Abhaya had been found some distance apart with no one clinging to them.

#### Mexico peace envoy cites advances

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Mexico's peace commissioner Manuel Camacho Solis said there had been "important advances" in efforts to end a 14-day peasant uprising in the southern state of Chiapas but warned that the peace process could be a long one. As Camacho pursued peace, fighting was dying out in the troubled region, the Mexican army said. A government official revealed that helicopters on loan from the United States to assist Mexican anti-drug operations had been used to support the government's counterinsurgency campaign. Mr. Camacho, named by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari earlier this week to seek an end to the bloody rebellion by the self-styled Zapatista National Liberation Army, said he was returning to Mexico City Friday to brief the president. "I think things are taking a suitable course. There are important advances," Mr. Camacho told a news conference before ending a three-day visit to the region.

#### U.S. cult trial jury sees charred remains

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (R) — A Texas Ranger testified in graphic detail Thursday about the horror of searching for evidence amid the body-strewn remains of the Branch Davidian compound. His evidence came in the second day of testimony at the murder and conspiracy trial of 11 Branch Davidian sect members. "All I smelled was rotten bodies. It was a horrible smell," said Ranger Roy Coffman, who stated many of the bodies were those of children. The dead were found in the rubble of the fatal April 19, 1993 fire that destroyed the Waco, Texas compound. Killed in the blaze were more than 90 Branch Davidians, including leader David Koresh and 17 children. Prosecutors displayed the charred remnants of a huge weapons hoard that was found in the compound remains.

#### Russia's Baltic force gets tough order

MOSCOW (R) — Russian troops in Latvia and Estonia have been told to return fire and shoot to kill if there are any attempts to seize their military installations, a Russian military statement said Friday. The North Western Command of Russian forces, which covers the Baltic region, issued the order following the temporary detention of two Russian generals and the blocking of four of their military installations in Latvia on Jan. 10. The order, read out on Commonwealth Television, said Russian troops had been instructed to "return fire and shoot to kill" in the event of any attempt to seize military installations. The Jan. 10 incident in which the two generals were led away by Latvian Civil Defence units prompted Moscow to declare a military alert. Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis dismissed an official, Andrei Rucs, whose decision to seize two Russian army buildings had sparked the incident. The brief detention of Major-Generals Nikolai Taitakov and Anatoly Vodopyanov had threatened to further damage relations between the two states, which are holding talks over the withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Latvia.

#### German wheelchair girl surrenders

BERLIN (R) — A handicapped schoolgirl who disappeared after apparently making up a story about Skinheads carving a Swastika on her cheek has surrendered to authorities. German police said Saturday. A spokesman in Halle said the 17-year-old, who uses a wheelchair, vanished Thursday after police launched a nationwide search for three skinheads she claimed had attacked her Monday. Doctors have told investigators they believe the Nazi-emblem cut on her face was self-inflicted. "We now know where the girl is," the spokesman said. "She is with her parents at a relative's house at a location far away from Halle. The relatives phoned us this morning. The girl is expected to be back in Halle tomorrow."

Saxony-Anhalt State Prosecutor Juergen Hossfeld said investigators had concluded the girl made up the story about the attack that had shocked a nation struggling to come to terms with a rise in right-wing violence.

#### AIDS has hit 3 million people

GENEVA (R) — An estimated three million people worldwide have developed full-scale AIDS since the disease was first identified in the late 1970s, the United Nations' World Health Organisation (WHO) said Saturday. But in a twice-yearly report, it estimated around 14 million adults and one million children have developed the HIV infection — which the WHO and many leading medical authorities say causes AIDS. The estimates — far higher than formally reported figures — represent an increase of half a million in AIDS cases since the last report in July and of one million in the incidence of adult HIV infections.

from Sarajevo to the northern town of Tuzla, but the frontlines did not change, the U.N. military spokesman in Sarajevo, Colonel Bill Aikman, said.

The United Nations said Serbs fired about 300 artillery and mortar rounds into the city Friday and Muslims responded with only 11 rounds.

The shelling, similar to an attack last year that marked the Orthodox New Year, was further defiance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which threatened air strikes against Serbs unless they released their grip on the city.

The speaker of the self-styled Bosnian Serb Republic's parliament, Momcilo Krajisnik, issued the latest in a series of bellicose statements by the Serbs in response to the threat of NATO military action against them.

Regardless of how unequal our position in that fighting would be, we would defend ourselves and use all means at our disposal for that purpose," he told a Serbian radio station.

A U.N. aid convoy remained stranded Saturday and its leader pledged that, however long it took, he would get a relief convoy through to a

besieged Muslim enclave being blocked by local Croats.

"I am prepared to stay forever. Because at the end of the day we will win," said Larry Hollingsworth, a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who has tried for three days to negotiate clearance for the convoy destined for the besieged Muslim enclave of Maglaj.

About 60 people blocked the road for a third day, demanding the Muslim-led Bosnian army free Croat prisoners in Maglaj in exchange for the release of Muslim detainees.

Another convoy was blocked between Gornji Vakuf and Novi Travnik Friday by about 200 Muslims complaining that they had not received enough humanitarian aid, Col. Aikman said.

"There was concern that another incident would occur in the area as a large amount of flour was taken off vehicles (in a previous convoy)," he said.

Col. Aikman said the convoy moved on only after a British U.N. military contingent escorting the convoy fired 15 rounds into the air to disperse the crowd.



U.S. President Bill Clinton speaks during a meeting with Russian youth at the Ostankino Television session in Moscow (AFP photo)

## Clinton challenges Russian youth to redefine the nation's future

MOSCOW (USA) — President Bill Clinton challenged Russia's young people to redefine their country's future as that of a peaceful nation intent on encouraging all its citizens to reach their full human potential.

"I believe the greatness of a nation is the ability to redefine itself for every age and time," Mr. Clinton told a televised Russian Town Hall Meeting. "The young people of Russia now have the chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism, that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice. That is your challenge."

Mr. Clinton spoke to the people of Russia via Ostankino, the central television centre that was the focus of the Oct. 3 showdown between President Boris Yeltsin's loyalists and anti-reform forces. "Ostankino," Mr. Clinton said, "stands as a symbol of the power of free expression and of the brave sacrifices the Russian people have been making."

Mr. Clinton's opening remarks sketched the themes of his state visit to Russia — his vision of a peaceful, politically and economically integrated Europe without ideological divisions. He then took questions from the studio audience.

His original choice, Steffen Heitmann, the justice minister of Saxony state, proved an acute political embarrassment to Mr. Kohl, pulling out of the race after coming under fire over his arch-conservative views.

The decision means Mr. Herzog will almost certainly be the chief rival of Social Democratic candidate Johannes Rau, premier of North-Rhine-Westphalia State, when the president is elected in May — a milestone in the run-up to October's general election.

The popular Weizsaecker must step down after completing a maximum of two five-year terms in the symbolic view.

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# Sports

## Harding accused of part in Kerrigan attack

PORLAND, Oregon (AP)

The bodyguard of figure skater Tonya Harding has accused her of planning the attack on her rival Nancy Kerrigan, a television report said, after he and two other men were charged in the assault.

Bodyguard Shawn Eric Eckhardt, in a statement to NBC news Friday, accused Harding with the "planning and covering up" of the Jan. 6 attack on Olympic figure skater Kerrigan after a practice session at the U.S. figure skating championships in Detroit, Michigan.

The assault left Kerrigan with an injured knee though she said Friday she expected to back on the ice "in the next few days."

Citing sources close to the official inquiry into the attack, NBC said that no arrest warrant had been served on Harding, but that she was the subject of an "active criminal investigation."

Earlier Oregon prosecutor John Bradley had declined to confirm reports that Harding was under criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported Saturday that the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) is to ask Harding to

withdraw from the Winter Olympic Games, which get under way Feb. 12 in Lillehammer, Norway, because her presence there would create a "logistical nightmare."

USOC's Executive Director Harvey Schiller had denied such reports late Friday.

Harding won the women's title in Detroit in Kerrigan's absence, and the two had been chosen for the U.S. Olympic team.

USOC officials earlier said

Harding's place on the team was safe so long as she was not implicated in the attack.

Kerrigan has refused to comment on her teammate's possible involvement.

Eckhardt, together with

alleged assailant Shane Stant and Stant's uncle Derrick Brian Smith, were in custody

Friday charged with conspiring in December to harm Kerrigan.

Authorities said the investigation into the alleged plot was continuing.

Eckhardt's lawyer Mark McKnight said his client had admitted involvement in the attack in which a man, allegedly Stant, hit Kerrigan in the right leg with a metal bar.

But McKnight added after

Eckhardt's arraignment that his



Nancy Kerrigan

client was "not smart enough" to have masterminded the assault.

Oregon prosecutor John Bradley earlier declined to confirm that Kerrigan was under criminal investigation.

"Not at this time," Bradley said. "We are investigating everything. We are going to be as complete as we can. Whatever you make of that."

He said earlier in the day that more people could be charged.

Earlier in the week, various news reports alleged Harding's ex-husband Jeff Gillooly had

been involved in the attack.

Eckhardt and Smith were arrested Thursday and Stant surrendered to authorities in Phoenix, Arizona Friday.

Indictments against the trio charged that they conspired in December in Portland, Oregon, to "unlawfully and intentionally cause physical injury to Nancy Kerrigan by means of a dangerous weapon, by means of striking Nancy Kerrigan in the leg with the dangerous weapon."

If convicted, they could face

up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

After the match Sampras rebuffed a fiercely determined Lendl to retain his New South Wales (NSW) open title with a 7-6 6-4 victory in a rain-affected final Saturday.

The unseeded Lendl, convinced he is fit enough to win

more titles at the advanced

tennis age of 33, was not

helped when the weather inter-

vened just before the crucial

first set tie-break.

He returned to save a third

set point, but put a backhand

into the net on the fourth to

give Sampras the tie-break 7-5

and effectively seal the result.

"It was pretty close, but in the end he was only one who made a break point. I didn't make any," said Lendl.

"I didn't serve as well after

the break as I did before, but otherwise I thought both of us played pretty well."

After the match Sampras

warned his Australian Open

rivals that he fears no-one as

he heads towards Melbourne

for the first Grand Slam

tournament of the year.

The 22-year-old Sampras

also revealed his desire to be

regarded as one of the best

players of all time.

It's sickening that someone

who's down to earth, polite,

behaves well, is reasonably

clever and wears nice clothes

has to apologize for the way he

is," said Sampras.

Before linking up with Gul-

likson, Sampras once accepted

Lendl's invitation to come and

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